

Kant and 'Merit': Retrieving a Neglected Notion of *Verdienst*

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The aim of this talk is very ambitious, as it proposes to argue for a change of perspective in the reading of some aspects of Kant's political philosophy and potentially of his practical thought more generally. Within the confines of this presentation, I will only be able to develop a few main arguments in support of the new interpretative perspective and to provide an outline of the new direction. In particular, I will argue that, beyond the well-known and influential Socialist (e.g., van der Linden 1988, Dodson 2003), Republican (e.g., Ripstein 2009, Forst 2013), Liberal (e.g., Rawls 2000, Pogge 2012), Consequentialist (e.g., Cummiskey 1996, Parfit 2011) and Libertarian (Williams 1983, Otteson 2009) readings of Kant, it would be promising to consider a Desert-sensitive reading. I will start, however, with the discussion of a frequently expressed worry that connects 'desert' with a conservative discourse attempting to justify privileges and the status quo.

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